

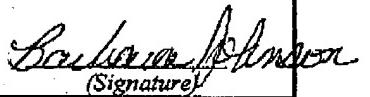
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE CENTRAL FAX CENTER

FEB 26 2004

In re application of:) Docket No. : A-2966-AU
GONZALES, et al.)
U.S. Serial No.: 10/695,295)
Filing Date: October 28, 2003)
Title: SURGICAL GEL SEAL)

Dear Sirs:

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. (703) 872-9306 on February 24, 2004 9nd 26, 2004 Barbara Johnson (Type or print name)


Attached please find the following documents submitted for filing in the above-referenced application.

1. Preliminary Amendment;
2. Amendment Transmittal; and
3. Notice of Omitted Items in a Non-Provisional Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

In response to the Notice of Omitted Items in a Non-Provisional Application
Filed Under 37 CFR 1.53(b), mailed February 3, 2004, please amend the above-
identified application as follows:

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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph three on page 8 with the following amended paragraph:

FIG. 14 is an axial cross section view illustrating another embodiment of a detent mechanism; and

Please replace paragraph four on page 8 with the following amended paragraph.

FIG. 15 is a top plan view taken along lines 15-15 of FIG. 14. [; and]

Please delete the paragraph on page 8 beginning with line 8 referring to FIG. 16.

Please replace paragraph two on page 17 with the following amended paragraph.

With a structure similar to that in Figures 8-12, the magnitude of the locking force represented by the arrow 134 is dependent upon the degree of separation between the tabs 136 and 138. The maximum locking force is provided when the tabs 136 and 138 are positioned as illustrated in Figure 11. The minimum force is applied when the tabs 136 and 138 are maximally separated as illustrated in Figure 12. Between these two extremes, a detent mechanism 145 can be provided so that the desired degree of locking force 134 can be achieved by movement of the tabs 136 and 138. This mechanism can include interfering projections 152 and 154 [are] formed on the

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tabs 136 and 138 are closed [,] to move the proximal housing portion 74b axially toward the distal housing portion 76b, these interfering projections 152 and 154 will detent to

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 18, lines 4 through 21, with the following amended paragraphs:

~~Turning now to Figure 16, a~~ A preferred method for manufacturing the valve 15 will be discussed contemplates use of a mandrel. Initially it will be noted that the various parts of the valve 50, including the proximal housing portion 74, the distal housing portion 76, the plug 81, and the screw cap 87, each have an axial hole or channel in the assembly of the valve. This enables the various parts to be threaded onto a the mandrel 160 which can be used to guide the various structural elements axially to their assembled relationship.

In a preferred method of manufacture, the distal housing portion 76a is initially placed on the mandrel 160. Then the plug 81a can be threaded onto the mandrel 160 through the channel 101a. The mandrel 160 holds these two elements in exact axial alignment so that the plug 81a can merely be pushed along the mandrel 160 and into the gel cavity 78a. At this point, the lead-in tube 125 of the proximal housing portion 74a can be threaded onto the mandrel 160. Again, the mandrel holds this part in axial alignment with the prior subassembly. With this alignment ensured, the proximal housing portion 74a can merely be pushed generally onto the distal housing

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portion 76a to compress the plug 81a. The wall 96a of the proximal housing portion 74a and the wall 112 of the distal housing portion 76a can then be joined by a snap fit, glue or preferably a sonic weld. Finally, the Luer cap 87a can be threaded onto the mandrel 460 and moved into a snap fit, rotatable relationship with the luer fitting 85.

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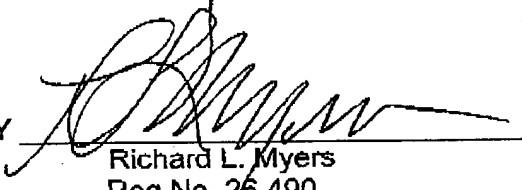
CONCLUSION

In response to the filing of the above-captioned application, the USPTO issued a Notice of Omitted Items indicating that Figure 16 described in the specification had not been filed. This preliminary amendment is drafted in response to that notice in accordance with the present amendment, all reference to Figure 16 has been deleted from the application. It is believed that the specification as filed without Figure 16 clearly covers the claims of the application. Accordingly, the application should be in condition for examination without any change in the filing date of October 28, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

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BY



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Date: February 24, 2004